

CHAPTER: IV <b>APPLICATION</b>	SECTION: 15 <b>ELIGIBILITY PERIODS</b>	COMAR: <b>07.03.04.05</b>
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## REQUIREMENTS

- A. Certify each case for a specific period of time, based on the family circumstances
  1. Require a new application at the end of each period
  2. Review all factors of eligibility for each eligibility period, and if necessary, verify
- B. The basic guidelines for determining the period of eligibility are:
  1. Certify child-only cases for one year if:
    - At least one child is expected to remain eligible for the year, and
    - The caretaker relative is not the parent of any of the children, or
    - The parent or caretaker is an SSI customer

**Note:** Sanctioned or technically ineligible parents are financially responsible for their children and the case should be certified for a period that reflects the parent's situation.

The caretaker relative who is not the parent of any child in the assistance unit is not financially responsible for the children and the eligibility period is based on the children's circumstances.

2. Certify for one year cases in which the head of household or other adult in the family is actively working on his or her independence plan
  - The individual is having regular on-going contact with the case manager or work program manager who will:
    - a. Discuss changes in income and family circumstances as part of overall independence planning and
    - b. Make appropriate case changes or report changes to the case manager

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3. Give four-month follow up appointments to cases in which one or more adult or minor parents:

- Are screened as possible abusers of alcohol or drugs, or
- Are in treatment for substance abuse

**Note:** The 4-month follow-up appointment is mandatory. The case is reviewed every 4 months until the individual is no longer in need of treatment.

4. Give all other cases certification periods based on the family circumstances, in accordance with local plans

- No certification period can exceed 12 months
- CARES assigns a certification period of 12 months, but that period can be shortened when a different period more accurately matches family circumstances
  - a. Six-month eligibility periods are most common
  - b. Periods of less than 6 months are not appropriate unless eligibility is clearly expected to end in less than 6 months:
  - c. Periods of more than 6 months may be appropriate when:
    - Circumstances are expected to be the same at 6 months, but a significant change is projected for a subsequent month

- C. Use the 745 alert to initiate a review of expected changes during the certification period

- D. When the assigned eligibility period is over, no additional benefits are issued unless the case manager completes the recertification

- E. CARES automatically schedules recertification interviews with the case manager

1. The case must be in an active status on CARES the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the month that is 2 months before the last month of eligibility, or recertifications must be manually scheduled
2. Advise applicants who are certified for less than 6 months that the recertification notice may be received very shortly after the approval notice

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## EXAMPLES

Example 1. Penny Partridge and her 3 children are eligible for TCA. Ms. Partridge is attending a beauty school and expects to complete the course in 8 months. This course is approved as part of her independence plan since she is expected to find a job when she gets her certificate. Ms. Partridge is not meeting regularly with a case manager. Her oldest child, Pricilla, age 16, is expecting her first child in 4 months.

- The case manager has several options from which to choose, based on local department preference. The case may be certified for:
  - a. 6 months, which is the average period
  - b. 8 months, to coincide with the end of the vocational training
  - c. 9 months, to allow time to find employment
- A 4-month certification period is not appropriate – a **745 alert** is needed to follow up on the birth of Pricilla's child
- A 12-month period is not recommended since Ms. Partridge is not in regular contact with her case manager and is expecting to find employment

Example 2. Mrs. Belvedere receives assistance for her niece and nephew.

- A 12-month certification period is set since Mrs. Belvedere is not financially responsible for the children

Example 3. Mrs. Anderson is an undocumented immigrant who receives assistance for her two children, who are citizens.

- The certification period is based on Mrs. Anderson's circumstances since she is financially responsible for the children
- The recommended period is 6 months unless specific circumstances indicate a different period

Example 4. Mr. and Mrs. Elkins receive assistance for themselves and their 4 children. Both parents are in training programs and regularly see or talk to the case manager as they work on various components of their independence plan.

- A 12-month certification period is appropriate since there is regular contact as the Elkins work on their plan

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Example 5. On February 2<sup>nd</sup>, Ms. Anthony applied for assistance for herself and her son, Andrew, who became 18 in January. Andrew is a senior in high school and expects to graduate in June.

- The case is certified for 5 months, February – June, because eligibility will definitely end in June

Example 6. Glenda Green receives TCA for herself and her 3-year old daughter. They were certified for 12 months because Ms. Green was placed in a training class that was expected to last for a year. During the health check-up with her doctor, Ms. Green screened positive for substance abuse and has agreed to outpatient treatment.

- The eligibility period does not change, but the case manager will now schedule follow-up appointments every 4 months as long as Ms. Green is eligible for TCA and continues to need treatment for substance abuse.

#### **ADDITIONAL INFORMATION**

- Assistance Unit – Basic Requirements
- Application - Substance Abuse
- Recertification – Recertification
- Interim Changes – Interim Changes